



North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Aging and Adult Services

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Michael F. Easley, Governor
Carmen Hooker Odom, Secretary

Dennis W. Streets, Director
919-733-3983

September 6, 2006

Dear County Directors of Social Services:

Attention: Adult Services Supervisors and Program Managers

Subject: Quality Improvement Consultation Program for Adult Care Homes

During late 2005, the North Carolina General Assembly ratified Session Law 2005-276, Section 10.40A.(p), which mandated the Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Aging and Adult Services to develop a Quality Improvement Consultation Program for adult care and family care homes to be implemented by county departments of social services. The law required the Division of Aging and Adult Services to convene a stakeholder task force made up of entities and organizations interested in adult care homes in North Carolina. The stakeholder task force includes representatives from adult care home providers, county departments of social services, consumer advocates, and other interested parties. After careful thought and deliberation by the stakeholder taskforce, a quality improvement consultation program topic, Medication Safety, has been chosen as the first project for development.

Medication management consists of several complex processes, including prescribing, transcribing, dispensing, storing, administering, and documenting. Errors can occur in any of these processes. Improving the safety of medication management is an important part of avoiding the harmful consequences that can result from improper use of medications. Deficiencies cited from October 2005 through March 2006 by the Division of Facility Services, Adult Care Licensure Section, revealed approximately 20% were in the rule areas of medication management.

The Carolinas Center for Medical Excellence, in collaboration with Emily Saunders, RN, Quality Improvement Program Manager with our Division, are developing a quality improvement program for Medication Safety based upon ideas and input from the stakeholder task force. The focus of this quality improvement project is on better care and quality of life in a safe environment for residents; providing dignity, choice, and independence to increase resident satisfaction; disseminating best practices to improve care; and using standardized instruments to assess and measure adult care home performance and resident outcomes.

Dear County Director of Social Services
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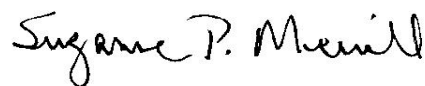
As required by Session law 2005-276, the Division of Aging and Adult Services will conduct a pilot of the Quality Improvement Program: Medication Safety in four counties in the spring of 2007. The pilot will include the county department of social services in each county and a sample of adult and family care homes within the chosen counties. At the conclusion of the pilot program, the Division of Aging and Adult Services will make recommendations to the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services and appropriate committees within the General Assembly regarding the effectiveness of the Quality Improvement Program. If the Division recommends expansion of the pilot to other counties or statewide implementation of the Quality Improvement Program, the report will include the cost, necessary staffing and other resources, and a timetable for implementation. It will also identify any statutory and administrative rule changes which may be needed.

We invite you and your staff to consider participating in the Quality Improvement Program pilot. During the next several weeks your agency will receive information about cluster meetings to be held across the state. These cluster meeting will provide more specific information concerning the Quality Improvement Program, the Medication Safety topic, and the pilot. We hope you will come to one of the cluster meetings to hear more about this Program and how you may participate in the pilot.

The demand for safe and quality care in adult care homes is increasing. The Quality Improvement Program creates an opportunity for county departments of social services, residents and their families, and adult care providers to promote better care and improve quality of life in a safe environment.

We look forward to sharing more information with you about this important Program. In the meantime, if you need additional information please contact Emily Saunders, Quality Improvement Program Manager, at 919-733-3818 or your Adult Programs Representative.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Suzanne P. Merrill".

Suzanne P. Merrill, Chief
Adult Services Section

SPM/es

AFS-17-2006